



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
May 27, 2008
5:00 P.M.
Council Office

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

V. Spencer, S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Sterner, M. Baez, S. Fuhs, J. Waltman

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, R. Hottenstein, T. McMahon

Steve Fuhs, Vice President of Council, called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

I. Parking Authority

Larry Lee, Parking Authority Executive Director, noted that it is the Parking Authority's wish to decrease the number of open tickets from ten to five to begin the booting and towing process. He noted that Allentown currently sets their limit at five open tickets. He noted his hope that this will assist in correcting habitual offenders.

Deputy Chief Talbot noted that the Police Department has no objections to this change.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Ms. Baez both noted their support.

Mr. Lee noted that he has discussed this issue with President Judge Schmehl and also has his support.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if this would assist with college students who do not pay their parking tickets. Mr. Lee noted that this will assist with this issue if the number is decreased to five. He noted that removing someone's car is a great deterrent.

Council noted their willingness to change the number of open tickets from ten to five.

Ms. Kelleher gave background information on the Parking Authority's ability to tow. Mr. Lee noted that the Parking Authority solicitor's opinion is that they may hire their own towing company. He reported poor service from Vince's towing in the past. He noted that the Parking Authority has been using K & J Towing since January 2006 and have been pleased with their performance.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the FOP is concerned with this issue. Deputy Chief Talbot noted they will be filing a grievance as this will take work away from the Police Department. He noted his disagreement with this stance. He noted his belief that this is a positive change and will allow the Police Department to pursue other matters. He noted that Chief Heim has the same opinion.

Mr. Lee noted that the Parking Authority is only pursuing vehicles with parking issues. It is not interfering with Police issues.

Ms. Baez noted her support for this change.

Mr. Spencer joined the meeting at this time.

Vince Gagliardo representing Vince's Towing joined the meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the City solicitor and the Parking Authority solicitor agree that the Parking Authority is able to contract with their own towing company.

Mr. Gagliardo gave a brief background. He noted that the Parking Authority scheduled tows in the past but that if an accident occurred, the contract would need to be changed. He noted his belief that the Parking Authority should only have authority to tow from their parking areas and not City-wide. He noted that if towing is done City-wide by the Parking Authority, the contract with the City will be violated. He described the towing process.

Mr. Hottenstein noted that he will review the contract between the City and Vince's towing. He noted that the Parking Authority is a separate entity from the City.

Mr. Spencer noted that it is also necessary to research if K & J Towing is a state licensed salver.

Mr. Spencer requested that this issue be tabled at this evening's meeting and discussed again in a Committee of the Whole meeting. He requested that Larry Lee, Chief Heim, and Vince Gagliardo be in attendance.

II. Housing Authority

Ed Stock and Dave Binder, representing the Housing Authority, presented information regarding the River Oak Apartments.

Council was informed that the Housing Authority will be buying this 73 unit development for \$1. It will be maintained as affordable housing but will not be federally subsidized.

Mr. Waltman questioned if this property would remain taxable. Mr. Stock noted that it would.

Mr. Spencer complimented the Housing Authority on their excellent work. He questioned if the Housing Authority would perform the maintenance. Mr. Stock noted that they would.

Mr. Fuhs questioned the assumption of the current debt. Mr. Stock noted that it would be assumed by the project. This will be a separate LLC but will be controlled by the Housing Authority.

Mayor McMahon questioned what the Housing Authority would do if they cannot repay the debt when it is due. Mr. Stock noted that the Housing Authority has been researching the undertaking of this project for a year. They will monitor rental rates to cover expenses. He noted a worse case scenario of the Housing Authority selling the property if the debt cannot be paid.

III. Local Redevelopment Authority

Mr. Spencer reviewed the situation with the LRA. He noted Council's desire to speak with Mr. Gontz from the Department of Defense to clarify concerns.

Mr. Gontz joined the meeting by teleconference.

Mr. Fuhs questioned the composition of the LRA. Mr. Gontz noted that the LRA should be representative of the jurisdiction. He noted that some LRAs consist of the governing body only, some include the school district and some are community representatives from the immediate area. He noted there is no set, established composition. It is up to each individual jurisdiction.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if a representative of the homeless should be included on the LRA. Mr. Gontz noted that some allow their participation but it is up to the local jurisdiction.

Mr. Sterner questioned who makes the appointments to the LRA. Mr. Gontz replied that the governing body decides the composition and passes the resolution.

Mr. Sterner questioned the proper procedure for interested parties to get access to the property. Mr. Gontz noted that Berks County already granted access to those interested while they were recognized as the LRA. He noted that notices of interest were already filed. He noted that organizations can visit during this time if new parties are interested. He noted they should all visit as a group and arrangements should be made through the Navy due to security reasons.

Mr. Sterner questioned if visits could be made now. Mr. Gontz noted that the City has been recognized as the LRA. He noted that the local representative of the Navy, Elaine Preston, is willing to arrange a tour and is looking forward to working with the City LRA.

Mayor McMahon questioned the deadline to submit notice of interest. Mr. Gontz noted that the official time has passed but that this is at the discretion of the LRA. He noted that the notices of interest filed with Berks County will remain active. The LRA can consider others.

Mr. Spencer thanked Mr. Gontz for his assistance. Mr. Gontz noted his willingness to meet with Council personally. He noted the OEA is ready to move forward.

IV. Agenda Review

There was a discussion of the length of Council meetings.

The meeting agenda was reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

By: _____
Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk